



"Golden"

J. Tackett

I met Tellus Calhoun at the World retriever Championship in March of 2005. I had heard the name a number of times. He had a reputation as a very good dog trainer whose dogs were good test dogs and good trial dogs. That's very rare, a trainer who dog's run and excel in both tests and trials.

Tellus brought a string of incredibly talented and well trained retrievers all the way to Banner, Mississippi from northern California. I remember admiring each and every dog he brought to the line at that event. But, he had one particular dog that stood out there. To be honest the reason she caught my eye time and time again was the way she looked. The way she ran and acted reminded me very much of Jerry Day's "Sue". SRSC-FC-AFC-HRCH-MHR "Super Sue" MH is considered by most to have been the best and maybe the most versatile retriever in history.

Goldie was her name. She was bigger than most females. Broad and muscled up, but she had a face, man what a face. It was soft and kind with those eyes. Her eyes just ate me up. They sucked you in, and you had to get down there with her. No, I couldn't just pet her I had to get on the ground with her and squeeze her.

Tellus did well in the WRC, and decided to start running SRS events. It wasn't long before he and I became fast friends. I loved Goldie and started to realize that she was a truly great one. She could handle long birds with the best of them, and she was steady and biddable making the hunting scenarios look easy. But, I was always amazed at how she could be so steady on the line, looking almost bored and then slide out of there like a rocket when released. The only other dog that I've ever seen with that much contrast from is Stacey West's "Rankin".



So...fall of 06 rolls around and we decide to head west at SRS, and off to Oregon we go. The 4th series is big with the last of the memory marks being about a 375 yard swim down a channel no more than 20 yards wide. Goldie did the mark when no one else could. She won SRS Oregon and at 10 yrs. old she was finally getting the recognition that anyone who had ever thrown a bird for her knew she had deserved for a long time.

As autumn moved along I called Tellus and asked him to meet me in Idaho to hunt in late December. Tellus' comment was "Man it's going to be cold, come to California and hunt where it's going to be warmer. Man, black guys don't do Idaho in December". It took some convincing but we talked him into it. So, there we were on the banks of the Snake River in late December and it was cold...somewhere around 5 degrees. Yella and Goldie sat side by side in a pile of downed trees. As the first group of about 250 mallards came up river and circled about 3 times I looked down at Goldie and she was just as rock steady as I had seen her at WRC, SRS and all the others over and over again. I wondered to myself how she would do, would she have the grit to handle this current and this weather. The dogs had a big job ahead of them because Tellus and I and 3 others were obviously in the right spot and with Idaho's liberal mallard limits there would be a bunch of birds to pick up before the end of the morning.

That first group of 250 came in and settled right into the decoys, it was one of those groups that you can't shoot into. You just have to watch em'. It was in the top 10 most beautiful sites I have ever seen while duck hunting. Goldie understood, and she just watched.

That day I watched Goldie do some amazing things. I saw her in a number of situations swim by wounded flapping birds to pick up longer dead bird marks. Purely because that was the bird she was sent for. I'm not talking about handling, I'm talking about "here's your line, now go!" Considering the river current, Goldie saved us more birds than I care to admit. I can honestly say I was more impressed with that dog's bid ability that day, than maybe any other dog I've had the pleasure to hunt with. She had every bit of everything she needed that day, and much more.

It was no more than a month later I got a phone call from Tracy Calhoun, Tellus' wife, saying that Goldie was going in for surgery because of what was thought to be "acute pancreatitis". 1 hour later I answered the phone call and Tracy told me that during the surgery they had found massive amounts of cancer inside Goldie and she was not going to make it out of surgery.

I sat in my truck after I hung up and thought to myself....the retriever world will never know just how special that dog really was. There is no title that will ever do Goldie justice.

*SRS Triangle C's Pure Gold MH MNH QAA "Goldie"
April 17, 1997 - January 23, 2007*